

Good Morning 196

The Daily Paper of the Submarine Branch

PIRATE SAFE HOME, But DEVIL GOT HIM (official)

Stuart Martin's
Unsolved
Crime

PARALYSED MURDERER VANISHES

THE village of Shepton Mallet lies not far from Bristol. In some ways it has not changed much since June 16th, 1768, when, in full daylight, with haymakers working in the fields and the countryside shimmering in the blazing sunshine, the most mysterious crime that ever took place was committed.

For on that day the Devil swooped on Shepton Mallet and stole a man.

That is what the local people said, and it has never been disproved. So here and now, before I relate this desperate crime, I reveal the criminal and charge Satan with murder and abduction—on the evidence of those who lived in Shepton Mallet and knew every detail of the outrage.

Whether you accept this evidence is another matter. But the local magistrates accepted it, the police accepted it, the villagers accepted it. But, as can be appreciated, the police, while they could name the culprit, were unable to issue a warrant for his arrest, not knowing his domicile, and not having forged a pair of handcuffs that would hold him even if they had known his abode. Therefore, judgment was passed by default.

THERE may, of course, be very respectable parents, and another explanation of the death and disappearance of old Owen Parfitt, who was a very queer individual and a scandalous sinner. He was the son of

and Shepton Mallet getting too hot to hold him, he ran away to sea.

At Bristol he boarded a vessel that took him to the Spanish Main where he became a pirate, and engaged in the slave trade. He pursued these diabolical callings until he reached late middle-age, and then he returned home.

He found only two relatives alive. One was his cousin, now a widow named Mrs. Lockyer, but still of no better reputation than of yore. The other was his sister, who was older than he was and was somewhat simple. He and his sister set up house together in a cottage about a hundred yards from Mrs. Lockyer.

Now the suspicious fact about Owen Parfitt was that although he no longer did any work he had plenty of money and spent it freely. Especially on drink at the local inn, where, when he was in his cups, he let slip strange stories of his past and the crimes he had committed when he was a pirate. He told terrible tales not only when he was drunk, but also when he was sober, and was perfectly shameless in his murderous past.

He had slit the throats of men, women and children, he had made prisoners walk the plank, he had burned treasure ships (after sacking them) and had seen tortures inflicted that made his listeners' blood curdle and their flesh creep. He could give names, dates, places.

As for his money, he was not

keeping that in the house. He received what he called "an allowance," but he had always to go to Bristol for it. Who gave it to him in Bristol was never known, for when he journeyed there he covered his trail; but it was suspected from a hint he once gave that he was "making somebody pay up."

In plain language, he was blackmailing somebody.

The villagers felt for him that strange interest that is akin to fear; and one day, when the landlord of the inn rebuked him for his murky past and remarked that there was little hope of his soul's salvation, old Parfitt glared and shouted, "Hell and damnation is my portion, that I know. I sold my soul to the Devil in the Spanish Main, and a bargain is a bargain. The Devil promised me plenty of money and I've got it. When he wants me he will come and get me."

He drank so deeply that day that they had to carry him home, muttering in his beard the while, about "the men in Bristol."

But next day he was up early and back at the inn to ask the landlord, wheedlingly, what he had said when drunk; and on the landlord assuring him he had not "given away any secrets," Parfitt set off for Bristol.

He returned the next day, drunk as usual, soaked to the skin in lashing rain, for he had been caught in a thunderstorm. And that was the last time he went to Bristol; next day he was struck down with paralysis of the legs.

For a long time he was confined to his bed, being attended by his old sister and a responsible woman named Susannah Snook. But doctors could not help him much, and the paralysis spread to his arms, although he could still grasp sticks with his hands, and, with the help of his sister and the woman Snooks, shuffled for a short distance, a matter of yards.

Now, even then he was never short of money. He kept a goodly sum in good gold in a belt, and the villagers noticed that at regular intervals strangers came to visit him from Bristol. These visitors were seafaring men.



THE OLD PRISON AT SHEPTON MALLET.

When they called on Owen

Parfitt they went to his room and he shot the bolt in the door, so that nobody knew what passed inside the room. The talk was carried on in whispers; but always Owen Parfitt had more money when his visitors had gone.

Matters went on like this for some time, during which the old pirate became worse. He got to the stage where he was able, with help, to get into the garden of the cottage now and then for a short time, on fine days. There a chair was placed and he was pillowed and wrapped in his greatcoat so that he could sleep in the sunshine; yet even then, if he was talkative, he spun yarns of his past that shocked the women and anyone who cared to listen.

On June 6th, 1768, he was almost carried down to his chair beside an apple tree. The sun was bright, but he was still cold, and his greatcoat was put around his shoulders. In the fields nearby the haymakers were at work. The country lanes were fairly busy with workers and carts. He grumbled to Susannah Snook about everything, insisted on telling her one of his terrible reminiscences, then fell asleep.

Susannah took the chance of running down to her own cottage some little distance away. She was gone less than twenty minutes, and when she hurried back she heard Mrs. Lockyer, Parfitt's cousin, calling loudly in a wailing tone. When Susannah reached the house, there was Mrs. Lockyer flailing her arms up and down and wailing, "He be gone. I can't find him! Owen be gone!"

And gone he was. His chair was empty, his overcoat lying on the grass beside it, and except for this everything just as Susannah had left the invalid—but there was no invalid.

His sister's statement was that she had gone upstairs to make his bed; and when she came down she went into the garden to have a look at him, and had seen the empty chair. The grass beside the chair was scorched as by sudden fire and the apple tree blasted.

An alarm was raised. The haymakers began a search. The policeman of the village was called in. The fields were crossed; the lanes investigated.

every ditch scanned. Neighbours stated that nobody had called at the cottage. A thunderstorm suddenly broke over the district, drenching everything and everybody, lightning played vividly; yet in spite of this the search continued all day, all during the night, and next day.

How could a cripple leave his chair, to which he had to be almost carried, and disappear? One theory was that some of his old cronies from Bristol had come and carried him off. But no strangers had been seen on the road, or in the village. The closest examination by local magistrates and police met a blank wall.

The house was searched, gardens were explored, ponds and rivers were dragged. The district within a radius of five or six miles was combed for clues. It was all in vain. Yet what, or who, had scorched the grass and blasted the apple tree before the storm?

Mrs. Lockyer and Susannah Snook underwent close questioning. Both stuck to their stories, and it was evident they were both telling the truth. Evidence was given that Parfitt had himself admitted that the Devil would one day claim him. He had often said that he had seen men in Africa disappear under the magic of obi-men who were leagued with Satan.

The investigation dragged on, in the hope that one day there would be a visit from the mysterious seafaring men of Bristol. Nobody ever came again to see Owen Parfitt. The money he had received stopped as strangely as it had been delivered. It was proved that there were no visitors on the day of his disappearance.

The magistrates and other authorities at last came to the conclusion that Owen Parfitt had been removed from Shepton Mallet by an evil, non-human agency. He had been stolen by the Devil to whom he had sold his soul.

The Poet Laureate of the day (Southey) wrote about the mysterious affair:—

The Devil he passed the cottage trim,
A cottage cosy and trim;
And he said with a grin,
"I'll just step in,
For I think there is somebody here,
That's been in my debt for many a year."

Whether the Devil carried off the aged, crippled adventurer I leave you to say. I do know that from that day to this there has not been any other explanation of the mystery.

Fifty years later—in 1813—when repairs were being carried out at a cottage later occupied by Mrs. Lockyer, the workmen came across a skeleton buried in the garden. Here, it was concluded, was the solution of Parfitt's disappearance. Expert anatomists were fetched.

The experts reported that the skeleton was that of a woman, not of a man. It was certainly not that of the pirate.

The case was gone into again, but after all investigations, the only suspect of the murder and abduction of Owen Parfitt remained the Devil. He was openly accused. Knowing the character of the suspect the local people accepted the conclusion, and the clergy denounced and outlawed him. No defence has ever been put forward.

STOKER WILLIAM BLEVINS, HERE'S MARLENE TEACHING JILLIAN

BEHIND the news that your sister, Mrs. Irene Plant, has left her old address in Ryder Row to live right next door to your father and elder sister in Central Road Gorton, Manchester, Stoker William Blevins, lies a charming story of child psychology.

It is the tale of your two tiny nieces—your sister's children, who now, of course, live next to your own home.

When Marlene, with a dimple in each cheek and a floppy brown bow in her hair, reached her fifth birthday recently, she became very much more impor-

tant than her sister, mischievous 18-month-old Jillian. For she had reached the exciting age of going to school.

Marlene assumed a certain quiet dignity as she left each day for the little school down the road. Sister Jill was too young for such adventures.

But one day the tables were turned—or almost. Their aunt—your elder sister, Miss Margaret Blevins—bought them a present of a large blackboard on an easel.

The younger girl, standing squarely on two sturdy legs, watched her big sister drawing somewhat scrawling figures on the board.

Then tiny Jill, chalk in hand, and gurgling and puffing, laboriously began to follow suit.

But the dignity of greater years was preserved. For Marlene is now to be seen, any evening before bedtime, instructing her smaller sister how to draw figures—in much the same way that teacher does at school.

Make this
Your own
Newspaper
Send us
Your news



HOW THE BRIGADIER LOST HIS EAR

"HE HAS ABANDONED ME TO MY FATE"

PART IV

QUIZ

for today

"LET him go! Let him go!" said the president. "It is, indeed, more than can be asked of flesh and blood that he should remain under this roof. But he is a true Venetian, and when the first agony is over he will understand that it could not be otherwise."

I had been forgotten during this episode, and though I am not a man who is accustomed to being overlooked, I should have been all the happier had they continued to neglect me. But now the old president glared at me again like a tiger who comes back to his victim.

"You shall pay for it all, and it is but justice that you should," said he. "You, an upstart adventurer and foreigner, have dared to raise your eyes in love to the grand-daughter of a Doge of Venice who was already betrothed to the heir of the Loredans. He who enjoys such privileges must pay a price for them."

"It cannot be higher than they are worth," said I.

"You will tell us that when you have made a part payment," he said. "Perhaps your spirit may not be so proud by that time. Matteo, you will lead this prisoner to the wooden cell. To-night is Monday. Let him have no food or water and let him be led before the tribunal again on Wednesday night. We shall then decide upon the death which he is to die."

It was not a pleasant prospect, and yet it was a relief. One is thankful for small mercies when a hairy savage with a blood-stained knife is standing at one's elbow. He dragged me from the room and I was thrust down the stairs and back into my cell. The door was locked and I was left to my reflections.

My first thought was to establish connection with my neighbour in misfortune. I waited until the steps had died away, and then I cautiously drew aside the two boards and peeped through. The light was very dim, so dim that I could only just discern a figure huddled in the corner, and I could hear the low whisper of a voice which prayed as one prays who is in deadly fear. The boards must have made a creaking. There was a sharp exclamation of surprise.

"Courage, friend, courage!" I cried. "All is not lost. Keep a stout heart, for Etienne Gerard is by your side."

"Etienne!" It was a woman's

voice which spoke—a voice which was always music to my ears. I sprang through the gap and I flung my arms round her. "Lucia! Lucia!" I cried.

It was "Etienne!" and "Lucia!" for some minutes, for one does not make speeches at moments like that. It was she who came to her senses first.

"Oh, Etienne, they will kill you. How came you into their hands?"

"In answer to your letter."

"I wrote no letter."

"The cunning demons! But you?"

"I came also in answer to your letter."

"Lucia, I wrote no letter."

"They have trapped us both with the same bait."

"I care nothing about myself, Lucia. Besides, there is no pressing danger with me. They have simply returned me to my cell."

"Oh, Etienne, Etienne, they will kill you. Lorenzo is there."

"The old greybeard?"

"No, no, a young, dark man. He loved me, and I thought I loved him until—"

until I learned what love is,

Etienne. He will never forgive you. He has a heart of stone."

"Let them do what they like. They cannot rob me of the past, Lucia. But you—what about you?"

"It will be nothing, Etienne. Only a pang for an instant and then all over. They mean it as a badge of infamy, dear, but I will carry it like a crown of honour since it was through you that I gained it."

Her words froze my blood with horror. All my adventures were insignificant compared to this terrible shadow which was creeping over my soul.

"Lucia! Lucia!" I cried. "For pity's sake tell me what these butchers are about to do. Tell me, Lucia! Tell me!"

"I will not tell you, Etienne, for it would hurt you far more than it would me. Well, well, I will tell you lest you should fear it was something worse. The president has ordered that my ear be cut off, that I may be marked for ever as having loved a Frenchman."

Her ear! The dear little

ear which I had kissed so often. I put my hand to each little velvet shell to make certain that this sacrilege had not yet been committed. Only over my dead body should they reach them. I swore it to her between my clenched teeth.

"You must not care, Etienne. And yet I love that you should care all the same."

"They shall not hurt you—the fiends!"

"I have hopes, Etienne. Lorenzo is there. He was silent while I was judged, but he may have pleaded for me after I was gone."

"He did. I heard him."

"Then he may have softened their hearts."

"I knew that it was not so, but how could I bring myself to tell her? I might as well have done so, for with the quick instinct of woman my silence was speech to her."

"They would not listen to him! You need not fear to tell me, dear, for you will find that I am worthy to be loved by such a soldier. Where is Lorenzo now?"

"He left the hall."

"Then he may have left the house as well."

"I believe that he did."

"He has abandoned me to my fate. Etienne, Etienne, they are coming!"

Afar off I heard those fateful steps and the jingle of distant keys. What were they coming for now, since there were no other prisoners to drag to judgment? It could only be to carry out the sentence upon my darling.

I stood between her and the door, with the strength of a lion in my limbs. I would tear the house down before they should touch her.

"Go back! Go back!" she cried. "They will murder you, Etienne. My life, at least, is safe. For the love you bear me, Etienne, go back. It is nothing. I will make no sound. You will not hear that it is done."

She wrestled with me, this delicate creature, and by main force she dragged me to the opening between the cells. But a sudden thought had crossed my mind.

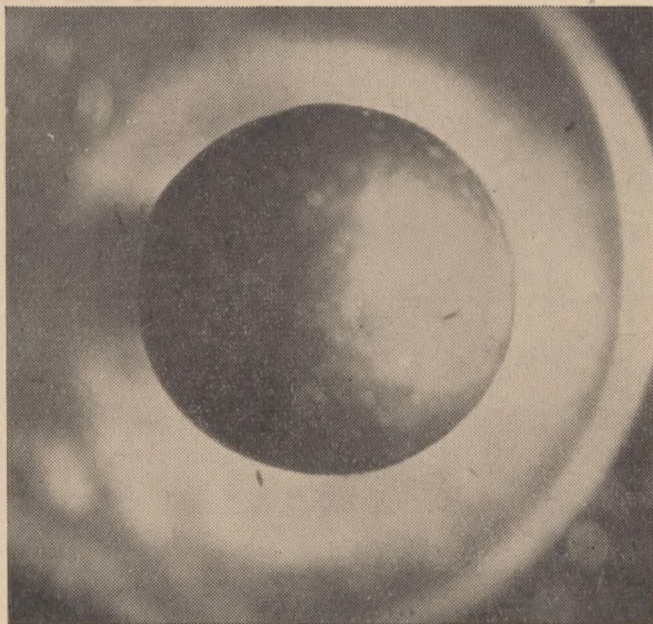
"We may yet be saved," I whispered. "Do what I tell you at once and without argument. Go into my cell. Quick!"

I was ever of opinion, that the honest man who married and brought up a large family, did more service than he who continued single and only talked of population.

Goldsmith.

By
CONAN
DOYLE

TO-DAY'S PICTURE QUIZ



WHAT IS IT?

JANE



I pushed her through the gap and helped her to replace the planks. I had retained her cloak in my hands, and with this wrapped round me I crept into the darkest corner of her cell. There I lay when the door was opened, and several men came in. I had reckoned that they would bring no lantern, for they had none with them before. To their eyes I was only a black blur in the corner. "Bring a light," said one of them.

"No, no; curse it!" cried a rough voice, which I knew to be that of the ruffian Matteo. "It is not a job that I like, and the more I saw it the less I should like it. I am sorry, signorina, but the order of the tribunal has to be obeyed."

(To be continued)

ODD CORNER

INSTEAD of saying "Good morning," the Dutch peasant greets a friend with "Smaakel yk eeten," or "May you eat a hearty dinner." In Cairo, where a dry skin may mean fever, the native salutes his friends with "How do you sweat?"

During the Franco-Prussian War, when Paris was besieged, the animals in the Zoo were killed and eaten. Henry Labouchère, the journalist, reported that "donkey is now all the fashion. The flesh is delicious, in colour like mutton, firm and savoury. . . . All the animals have been eaten but the monkeys; these are kept alive from a vague notion that they are our relatives."

WANGLING WORDS—151

- Place the same two letters, in the same order, both before and after CREPITU, to make a word.
- Rearrange the letters of NEAR BLOW TOMMY to make a famous hunting centre.
- Altering one letter at a time, and making a new word with each alteration, change: YOUR into MINE, MONEY into CARDS, BACK into FIRE, YOUR into LEAD.
- How many four-letter and five-letter words can you make from EMANCIPATE?

CROSSWORD CORNER

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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	15		16		17			
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		22			23	24		
25	26		27	28			29	30
31		32		33				
34			35			36		37
38					39			
	40							

CLUES ACROSS.

- Economy.
- Adhesive substance.
- Girl's name.
- Man's name.
- Pell like snow.
- Fasten tightly.
- Get rid of.
- Gladdened.
- Fruit.
- Word of thanks.
- Supposing.
- Pet notion.
- Finds place of.
- Boy's name.
- Actor.
- Improvement.
- Long W. Indies island.
- Sphere of action.
- Gem of a girl.
- Put down.

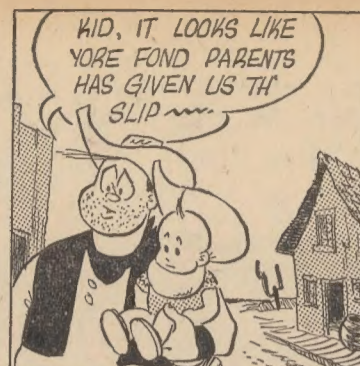
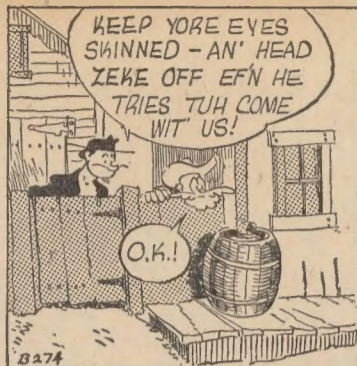
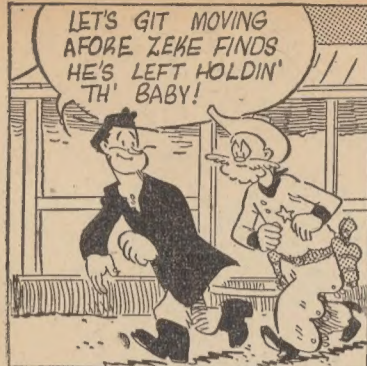
Solution to Yesterday's Problem.

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MODE SPEED
PALEST ERRS

CLUES DOWN.

- Foreign coin.
- Magenta.
- Treatment.
- Boring device.
- One.
- Badly.
- Cape Dutch.
- District of Canada.
- Naval student.
- Recommence.
- Remuneration.
- European mountains.
- One who cures.
- Small cubes.
- Funny shows.
- Electrical unit.
- Put off.
- Another electric unit.
- Pleasure jaunts.
- Hurt with heat.
- Storm signal.
- Smart blow.
- Cricket score.
- Remain.

BEELZEBUB JONES



BELINDA



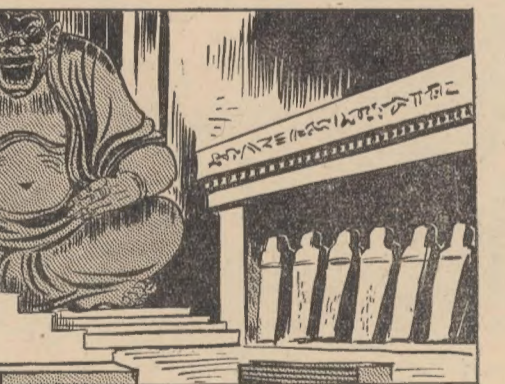
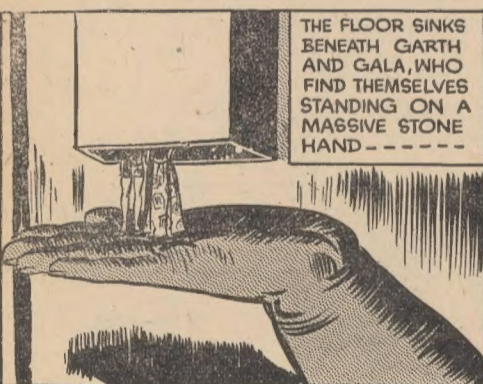
POPEYE



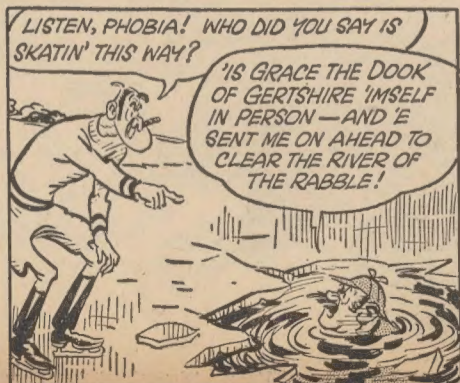
RUGGLES



GARTH



JUST JAKE



MEN WHO MAKE MEDALS

By Robert De Witt

THE recently created decorations of the Africa Star and the 1939-43 Star means that many hundreds of thousands of men and women in the Forces and the Merchant Navy become entitled to a medal, but they will not get them until after the end of the war.

The manufacture of this great number of medals now would mean the diversion of metal and man-power which could not at the moment be spared. The comparatively easily made ribbons, however, will be distributed as soon as they can be manufactured.

It took the Mint, which makes all medals except the Victoria Cross, many years to complete the great number required for decorations awarded for services during the 1914-18 War, when 5,300,000 British War Medals were awarded and about 5,000,000 Victory Medals. The total number of decorations ran to 12,000,000.

The making of a medal calls for a combination of fine art and exact science. The designer of the medal has to bear in mind the method by which it will be made. For instance, if the design called for deep impressions at the same spot on both sides, the whole piece of metal might collapse under the great pressures used.

STRIKING THOUSANDS.

The modern method of making medals is exactly the same as that of making coins. The artist prepares his design as a model in wax or plaster several times the final size. This is reproduced electrolytically in metal, and the model then reduced to the required size by a machine working on the pantograph principle. The die is made from this in special steel, which is soft when worked and afterwards made sufficiently hard to strike thousands of medals without perceptible wear.

Blanks are stamped out of a strip of silver or whatever alloy is to be used for the medal. This work, formerly done by hand, is now carried out at high speed by a machine. A pressure of 80 tons to the square inch is required for the actual striking. Only highly specialised machines such as we use for our coinage make it possible to produce medals numbered in millions.

All medals, except Victory medals, are paid for from the King's Privy purse. The King is the fount of all honours and decorations in Britain.

The Victoria Crosses are still made by the same firm of West End jewellers who made the first Victoria Cross given by Queen Victoria in 1856.

In a special ledger is recorded the name of every recipient and a note of the deed which gained him this highest honour. Queen Victoria instituted the V.C. largely on her own initiative, and the simple and dignified inscription "For Valour" was her own choice in preference to the more elaborate wording submitted by the experts.

IN ANTICIPATION.

A number of the various medals for gallantry and courage are usually kept in hand by the appropriate Service department. We do not follow the Germans in producing huge quantities of medals in advance! Before the 1914 War they had prepared a bronze medal showing the Arc de Triomphe in Paris and engraved "1871-1914." But history did not repeat itself, and this medal, marked "Entry of the German Troops into Paris," became a collector's curiosity.

They blundered again with their notorious "Lusitania Medal." It was engraved, "The liner Lusitania sunk by a German submarine, May 5th, 1915." But the liner was not sunk until May 7th!

Only once have we made a similar blunder in our anxiety to get out medals. In 1900 it looked as if the South African War was over, and medals were engraved with the dates "1899-1900." But the war continued, and did not end until 1902. Rather than melt down the medals, the authorities decided to remove the dates altogether. Traces of the wrong date are said to be observable on many medals.

LAUGH

With Shaun McAlister

The old gentleman stopped the little girl who was playing in the gutter. "You're pretty dirty," he said. "Sure," she smiled, "but I'm prettier clean."

A visitor walking down the village street one summer night heard the singing of the local choir. He stopped to listen. One of the inhabitants was standing nearby admiring the sweet chirrup of a cricket.

"What beautiful singing," suggested the stranger.

"Yes," said the other, "they do it by rubbing their hind legs together."

Said the parachute instructor to his pupils: "And if the parachute doesn't open—well, gentlemen, that's what is called jumping to a conclusion."

Good Morning

All communications to be addressed to: "Good Morning," C/o Press Division, Admiralty, London, S.W.1.



Come, come, sister, be reasonable—you'll have half the boys standing on their heads, and the other half losin' 'em.

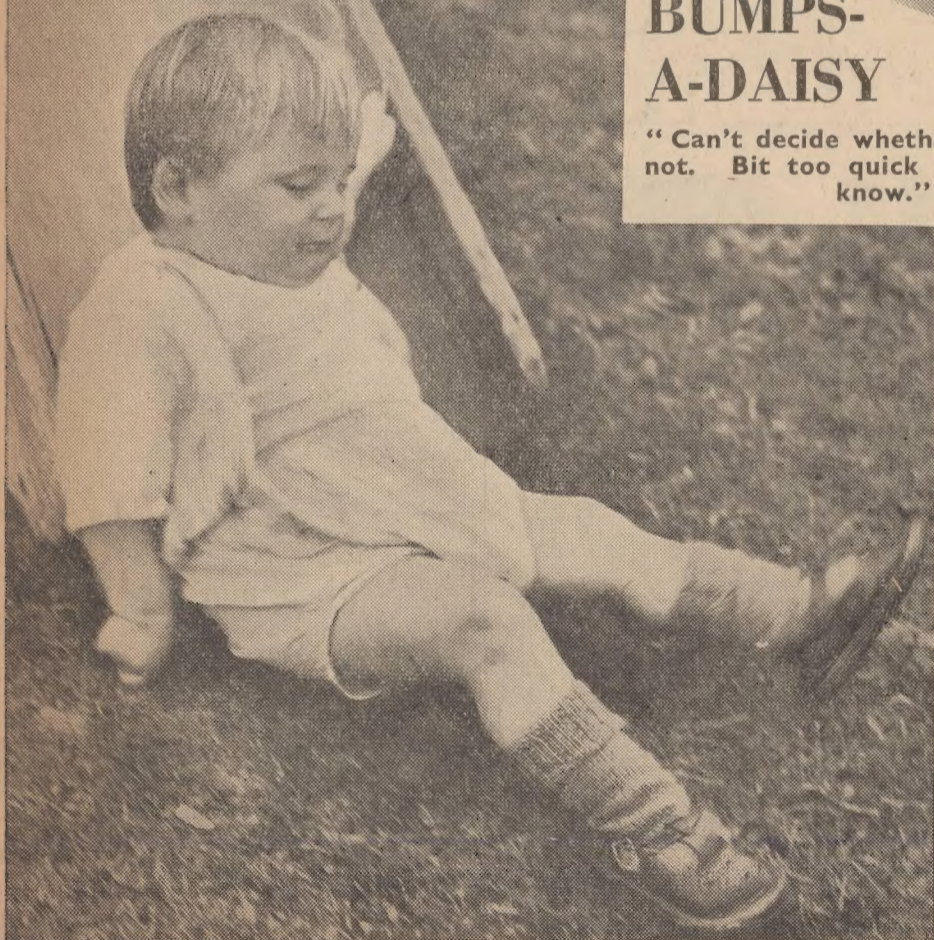
This England

Crossing the ford at Upper Wallop, Hampshire. Seems a long time since we wound our way through leafy Hampshire lanes.



BUMPS-A-DAISY

"Can't decide whether I like it or not. Bit too quick to think, you know."



"Asked me to show you my tongue, they did, then cut my head off to save you climbing up my neck."

"I wonder if I could possibly snaffle that bone. She pretends not to be interested. Damn her, if I make the slightest move she'll . . . Gosh, I daren't think."

SHIP'S CAT SIGNS OFF

"That's brought him to earth"

